

The Undead Eighteenth Century 2010 EC-ASECS Presidential Address

by Linda Troost

As both EC-ASECS president and one of the troika organizing the conference, it seemed appropriate that my presidential address should unite my two jobs. A subject that connected things Pittsburgh with the eighteenth century would be ideal. Perhaps an analysis of the political policies of William Pitt the Elder, the source of this town's name? Steel manufacture in the eighteenth century? Canning? After all, Pittsburgh is the home of the H. J. Heinz Corporation. I could discourse eloquently on Nicolas Appert, who won the twelve thousand franc prize with his method to preserve food for military stores.¹ Not only that, but I could bring along some of my home-grown tomatoes and discuss their role in eighteenth-century culture as I demonstrated Appert's method. Dr. Johnson may not have included *tomato* in his dictionary,² but we know that they were definitely eaten by the "metropolitan elite" in the second half of the eighteenth century.³ Jane Austen was eating them at the start of the nineteenth: "Fanny & I regale on them every day," she writes from Godmersham Park.⁴ But, novel as such a demonstration might be, the technical requirements proved daunting. So, what else in Pittsburgh would have an eighteenth-century tie-in? What else is Pittsburgh famous for, other than the steel industry, the utter collapse of the steel industry in the 1970s, and the city's subsequent return from the dead to become a symbol of economic recovery—the reason it was chosen as the host for 2009's G-20 Summit? Ah—that's it: "return from the dead."

You can hardly go into a bookstore or through the menu on your cable television without stumbling on zombies and vampires. They may be among the best known creations from our period in the modern non-scholarly world (along with the novels of Jane Austen). As Markman Ellis observes, "the vampire's origins can be located quite precisely in the mid-eighteenth century."⁵ Early tales of the bloodsuckers, however, turn out to be allegorical more often than supernatural. In *The Craftsman* (20 May 1732), for example, an account of a Hungarian vampire-attack turns out to be a satire on Robert Walpole, whose economic policies were seen to be draining the life blood of the nation (Ellis, 165–67). Proper vampires, however, appear or are mentioned in later works, including Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* (1762), Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), and John Stagg's poem "The Vampyre" in *The Minstrel of the North: or, Cumbrian Legends* (1810).

But what about the zombie? (I assure you that it will have a Pittsburgh connection.) While the term may date from our period, none of the meanings matches our current concept of "the walking dead."⁶ The Enlightenment zombie, in contrast, was a spirit, a ghost, a deity, or, in some cases, a high-level administrator.⁷ The earliest use of the term in print seems to be Pierre-Corneille Blessebois 1697 *Le Zombi du grand Pérou*, in which a woman is tricked into thinking she's an invisible spirit, a zombi.⁸ A meaning closer to our modern usage occurs in English in 1726 in *A History of the Voyages and*

Travels of Capt. Nathaniel Uring: “at the Death of a Person, it is customary for them to kill Hens, and sprinkle the Blood both without and within-side the House . . . thereby they prevent the Spirit of the dead Person from coming to give Zumbi to any of the future Inhabitants; the Word *Zumbi* signifies the Apparition of the dead Person, they being of Opinion to whomsoever it shall appear the Person will presently die.”⁹ A 1788 translation of the French *History of Okano* explains in a footnote that zombies are ghosts, “the spirits of dead wicked men, that are permitted to wander, and torment the living.”¹⁰ Eleven years later, in 1799, zombies are mentioned in a tale in the *European Magazine*, “The Generous Carib.” This time, however, they are deities to whom Orra prays after his beloved Yarro is taken by slavers: “He threw himself on the earth in agony, calling on the Zombies to restore him his love.”¹¹ All three of the English uses, incidentally, predate the *OED*’s reference from Robert Southey’s 1819 *History of Brazil*, in which *zombi* refers to the elected chief of the maroons in Pernambuco.¹²

The concept was there in the eighteenth century, however, but under another name—after all, Samuel Taylor Coleridge evokes the walking—well, ship-sailing—dead in *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The closest things were Icelandic *draugar*, animate and malevolent corpses, surprisingly common in ancient Norse sagas, which were enjoying a revival in translation during the Enlightenment. *Draugar*, who take “the offensive” by either attacking and eating those who invade their burial barrows or by venturing out of their barrows to “cause trouble further afield” are the true ancestors of modern zombies.¹³ While some saga material was available to European readers before the eighteenth century through Saxo Grammaticus, and similar stories existed in medieval England,¹⁴ ancient Norse literature benefitted from the eighteenth century’s interests in primitive national literatures and things antiquarian. As a result, the bloodthirsty, gothic subject matter of the sagas gained currency outside of Scandinavia in the second half of the eighteenth century. Paul Henri Mallet, a professor in Copenhagen, published (in French) studies of ancient Scandinavian culture in 1755 and 1756, which were translated into English in 1770 by Bishop Thomas Percy as *Northern Antiquities: or A Description of the Manners, Customs, Religion and Laws of the Ancient Danes, and Other Northern Nations*. In 1763, Percy published *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*, which influenced a surprising number of later writers, such as Thomas Gray and Anna Seward.¹⁵ An 1814 text, *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, recounted the legends of the north and also included an abstract by Sir Walter Scott of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, a work that contains a wealth of *draugar*, such as an account of the restless corpse of Thorolf Baegifot, who “walked forth from his tomb to the great terror and damage of the neighbourhood, slaying both herds and domestics,” as well a description of the first zombie epidemic in literature.¹⁶

Thorolf Baegifot. When you think of zombies, you think of something like him, or like the *draug* Asuidus, who attempts (with partial success) to eat Asmundus when he tries to share his barrow as an act of loyalty to his dead

friend.¹⁷ These are *Thriller* zombies, the living dead. And this is where the Pittsburgh connection comes in. George Romero, a Carnegie-Mellon graduate, created that kind of zombie in the many films he made in this area, the first being *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and the last being *Diary of the Dead* (2008), which features characters who are students or faculty at the University of Pittsburgh.¹⁸ Romero set the modern standard for the zombie, a slow, inarticulate, shambling, undead thing motivated only by a desire to eat human flesh, knowing no master and being horribly persistent.

Recently, the long eighteenth century has become a preferred setting for comic horror literature, appropriate since it was our century that invented the Gothic novel. For example, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* were all the rage last year. In May 2010, at the Cannes Film Festival, a trailer was shown for a comic film in the style of Tony Richardson's *Tom Jones*. The name? *E'gad, Zombies!* It features Sir Ian McKellan as the narrator, discoursing wittily about the tribulations of the residents of Upper Trollop, a village infested with zombies in hoop petticoats and tricorn hats.¹⁹ Why the affinity for the long eighteenth century instead of, say, the 1920s? Kyle Bishop suggests that "apocalyptic narratives . . . particularly those featuring zombie invasions, offer a worst-case scenario for the collapse of . . . social and governmental structures."²⁰ It may be that the popular perception of Enlightenment and Regency England as a time of rigid, stable, elaborate social codes and costume provides the ideal setting for parodying apocalypse narratives. The propriety of the powdered wig contrasts comically with the decaying zombie wearing it.²¹

Jane Austen was the first in our period to get the monster treatment and still is the particular focus of it. Since 2009, new books have been created, rather as Dr. Frankenstein created his monster, from bits and pieces of her books, other authors' books, and films. Works like *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* are just some of the entries in the quest to eat Jane Austen's brains. In the future, we can look forward to an Elton-John-produced film called *Pride and Predator*—about space aliens in Meryton.²² These comic "mash-ups"—blends of mostly Austen's own text with interpolated monster mayhem—may seem like nonsense, but they do manage to reanimate bits and pieces of Austen's novels that a modern reader might not notice in the original. Like the various film adaptations, they, too, are acts of interpretation.

How did these book come about? Jason Rekulak, creative director at Quirk Books, admits the conception for the Austen mash-up was serendipitous but calculated:

The inspiration came from the copyright violations that you see online, [at] places like YouTube, where people create their own interpretations of movies, music videos, and other media. I compiled a list of public domain books . . . and looked for ways to add to those books. So I had two lists, one of books and one of new elements [pirates, ninjas, space aliens,

zombies], and as soon as I drew a line between *Pride and Prejudice* and zombies, I knew that was the one. But it was in large part inspired by trying to do something creative, and a desire to not get sued.²³

Austen may be in the public domain, but she is also a hot property, and her power comes from her symbolic function in modern popular culture. The use of her name as shorthand for the elegant life took off in the mid-1990s with the lush Emma Thompson adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* and the famous BBC *Pride and Prejudice* with Colin Firth. *Austen* became a signifier for another way of life: one that was genteel, restrained, subtle, and tasteful. In the financial madness and “irrational exuberance”²⁴ of the dot-com era and its unfortunate aftermath, that restraint and slowness has had great attraction. For many, Austen represented *rational* exuberance, the antithesis of apocalypse, and she serves as a patron saint to protect her fans from the crassness of the world.

Inevitably, such sacred status provokes iconoclasm. Because of this rock-solid reputation in the non-academic world as a writer of taste, restraint, and class, she becomes the perfect vehicle for parody—of her work, of Janeites, of our times. For some readers, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is merely good-natured mockery of a “classic” rammed down throats in school, a burlesque in the tradition of Scarron’s *Le Virgile Travestie* (1648). Others are amused by the incongruity of the pairing, seeing it as satire of readers of escapist romantic fiction. To a third group, however, it is an appropriation that comments perceptively on the original as well as on our culture. It is best to think of these pastiches in the tradition of *Clueless*—Amy Heckerling’s modernization of Jane Austen’s *Emma* translated to modern-day Los Angeles—or perhaps as alternative-universe plots, like the ITV television serial *Lost in Austen* or the novel *Mr. Darcy, Vampire*. To the surprise of the publishers, it has been Austen readers who seem to enjoy the burlesque the most: zombie fans find the 85% of the original novel that remains “too much Austen.”²⁵ Unintentionally, the mash-ups have brought Austen readers to horror fiction, not the reverse.

Monsters have always had a place in classic literature. For example, Grendel and his mother in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* exhibit some qualities of the modern zombie: they are inarticulate, they eat human flesh, and they just keep coming after the Danes for no reason. And most telling of all, they are strangely human and represent the Danes’ failings: pillaging, vengeance, pride. Spenser and Milton employ monsters (Error, Sin) in a similar fashion. Using an allegorical monster to represent social and spiritual fears and failings, in short, has a long history, one into which *The Craftsman* could tap in 1732. Zombies function the same way. The best modern films, such as George Romero’s landmark film *Night of the Living Dead*, work within this allegorical tradition. Romero’s film is about a monster invasion, but it also taps into anxieties of the late 1960s: the dehumanizing violence of the Vietnam War, uneasy reactions to the Civil Rights movement, about how humans easily become as monstrous as the monsters (Bishop, 27, 94–95). Romero’s other

films, such as *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), update the allegory. Here, he situates zombies in the Monroeville shopping mall (twelve miles from downtown Pittsburgh), where they represent a different kind of brain-dead consumer and expose “the true problem infecting humanity” (Bishop, 130). The 1990 remake of *Night of the Living Dead* makes the connection between zombies and humans explicit: protagonist Barbara, now updated to a kick-ass feminist heroine instead of a shell-shocked blonde, ends the film with the lines “They’re us. We’re them and they’re us” as she watches the local sheriff and his posse manhandle corpses destined for a pyre with as little care as the zombies treated humans. So, on one level, zombies are gross monsters in B movies; on another, they are sites of “social and cultural anxieties,” symbols of our own lack of humanity (Bishop, 127, 95).

Zombies succeed because they can work on many levels. It is the complex history behind the American zombie film that makes *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* successful. Regency England is certainly a place deeply laden with social and cultural anxiety, rife with selfish and hypocritical people, so the introduction of gratuitous zombies works surprisingly well. I do not think that Seth Grahame-Smith was aiming at anything other than entertainment when he took on the commission to add zombies to *P&P*, but the book works because the zombies add a new dimension to Austen interpretation. The interpolations expose the civilized veneer covering a competitive, Hobbesian world. In the original novel, Elizabeth uses rapier wit to duel with Darcy; why not go one step further and give her a rapier?²⁶ Or, even funnier: ninja throwing-stars and a samurai sword? As she spars verbally with Mr. Darcy, well, why not let them really spar? One technique of satire is to treat the metaphorical literally; so does the mash-up. The first proposal scene shows this nicely:

“Do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man who has been the means of ruining, perhaps forever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?”

As she pronounced these words, Mr. Darcy changed colour; but the emotion was short, [*new material*] for Elizabeth presently attacked with a series of kicks . . . One of her kicks found its mark, and Darcy was sent into the mantelpiece with such force as to shatter its edge.²⁷

It’s not subtle, but satire rarely is. The interpolations make concrete Elizabeth’s aggression.

As in the Romero films, though, we see the violence of the zombie barely distinguished from the violence of the zombie slayer. The five Bennet girls, Mr. Darcy, and Lady Catherine de Bourgh—all extensively trained in the Far East in martial arts—become as violent and bloodthirsty as the zombies themselves. In the original novel, Mr. Darcy notes that “I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper I dare not vouch for.—It is I believe too little yielding . . . certainly too little for the convenience of the

world . . . My temper would perhaps be called resentful.”²⁸ In the mash-up, this gets kicked up a notch: “I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper I dare not vouch for. I have taken many a life for offenses which would seem but trifles to other men.” Elizabeth Bennet is his equal, in both wit and weaponry. She replies in the mash-up: “That is a failing indeed! . . . But you have chosen your fault well for it is one which I share. [*new material*] I, too, live by the warrior code, and would gladly kill if my honour demanded it” (Austen and Graham-Smith, 46). In fact, we see her kill several of Lady Catherine’s ninjas as well as nearly take out Lady Catherine. The training Elizabeth has received so that she can slay zombies makes her as callous about human life as the zombies themselves. Considering that the original Austen novel shows us a heroine of honor, deeply interested in human character, the mash-up makes painfully clear just how violence desensitizes even an Elizabeth Bennet, let alone the modern reader, and how much violence can underlie the word *honor*.

Rather oddly, what Grahame-Smith is embarrassed by is Austen’s hard-headedness and lack of sentimentality. In the original novel, the one person willing to put herself up for marriage without love is Charlotte Lucas, rapidly approaching thirty and with no dowry to speak of. Austen has her make a marriage of convenience with the ridiculous Mr. Collins, but Grahame-Smith cannot bear that, so he rewrites her fate to make her romantically tragic. Charlotte is the only principal character in the novel to be zombified or, as the book calls it, *stricken*. Therefore, her reason for a hasty marriage with Mr. Collins is to grab a little happiness. Grahame-Smith tries to generate some sympathy for Charlotte by having her desire more than mere security, which is all Austen has her desire: “I don’t have long, Elizabeth. All I ask is that my final months be happy ones, and that I be permitted a husband who will see to my proper Christian beheading and burial” (Austen and Graham-Smith, 99). Of course, the final bathetic phrase reminds us where we are: in a dark comedy. In the middle section of the novel, we see Charlotte humorously degenerate before our eyes—humorous because Mr. Collins apparently never notices that his wife is dwindling into a zombie, despite her inability to eat with utensils, speak clearly, or walk without lurching. She gradually metamorphoses into what those in the novel call “an unmentionable”—quite literally. No one talks about what is happening to Charlotte. In fact, no one much talks directly about the “unpleasantness” that the “dreadfuls” cause in this world full of superficial people, a rather nice satiric touch that Austen herself might enjoy. After all, “so much of Austen is about the unmentionable”; Grahame-Smith’s book makes that explicit and funny.²⁹

Not everything works equally well in this book. For instance, having Mr. Collins commit suicide after beheading his wife seems inappropriate for a comic butt—more Brontë than Austen—but it fits with the author’s nervousness about Charlotte. Of course, the mash-up does incredible violence to Austen’s subtle touch—that’s the point of satire. The joke mostly lies in playing against that famous subtlety, as well as trashing the shallow elegance

of the world about which she writes (or that we see in the films). But the zombie version does highlight some of Austen's blind spots: the tendency to avoid discussing unpleasantness, for instance, or the rigid class structure.

The latter failing is developed in both Austen mash-ups. It is no accident that the zombies, normally equal-opportunity monsters (unlike aristocratic vampires), are mostly members of the lower classes—servants, coachmen—not members of the gentry (although they, too, are attacked and killed). We do not know what has brought on the plague of zombies, but we can see the lower classes suffer from it disproportionately. In Quirk Books' second offering, *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, by Ben Winters, the class issues are more obvious. Essentially, the plot arc is the same as Austen's, but the characters are jiggered to fit into a dystopian world in which all the creatures of the sea have declared war on mankind. The social snobbery is most apparent in Sub-Marine Station Beta, an allegory for London, where the rich can afford to live protected from the malevolent animals that prowl the coast of England and Wales. In scene after scene, we read about servants being regarded as expendable. When the dome of Sub-Marine Station Beta begins to crack, servants are sent outside to deal with the aggressive fish that have instigated the damage. Guess who ends up eaten?

Servants are to be invisible. Austen has no trouble with that. For example, she describes the arrival of Edward to Barton Cottage as if he were alone: "Amongst the objects in the scene, they [Elinor and Marianne] soon discovered an animated one; it was a man on horseback riding towards them." But a few lines later, we learn that there is not just one man: "He dismounted, and giving his horse to his servant, walked back with them to Barton, whither he was purposely coming to visit them."³⁰ But Winters, like many a modern reader of Austen, is not comfortable with erasing the working classes from the text, and he parodies this blindness in his mash-up. In one key scene of *Sense and Sensibility*, when Edward, Lucy, and Elinor—a romantic triangle—find themselves unexpectedly alone together, they really are alone. In the Winters version, however, Edward, Lucy, and Elinor most pointedly are not:

It only contributed to the awkwardness when the loud bang was heard against the glass back wall of the docking; turning their heads, they saw that a servant, who had been changing the water filtration tank and come detached from the breathing hose of his special Ex-Domic Float-Suit, was clamouring for their attention. The operations of the Station's various life-sustaining apparatuses were meant to be entirely invisible to the inhabitants, and the man's noisy exhibition was a rather embarrassing violation of decorum; Elinor and her guests studiously ignored him, and his increasingly insistent thrashing became the background to the ensuing uncomfortable exchange.³¹

The scene concludes with the servant's being bitten in half by a giant anglerfish, noticed only by Marianne, who has arrived on the scene. Written in

imitation of Austen's restrained style, it underscores the invisibility in Austen's novels of the servants who make life in Regency England so smooth for their masters—and the indifference of those masters. But the books are comedies, not works of social criticism, and if they make some salient points about life in the long eighteenth century, they do so as a sideline—most of their barbs are aimed at the twenty-first century. Our culture is not necessarily more sensitive to the plight of the working class.

Could Jane Austen have written horror novels? Certainly. Vampires would have been available literary constructs as well as sea monsters. The first description of a *kraken*, a giant squid, reached England in 1755, and according to newspapers, one washed up on the coast of Orkney in 1808, during Austen's lifetime.³² Zombies, too, might have lurched across her path. I can imagine she had friends who may have read the recently published translations of the *Eddas* and discussed *draugar* in her presence. She was not squeamish, after all. She well could have read about Asmundus and the *draug* who nearly ate him in *The European Magazine* of 1799, a mere one page away from the "The Generous Carib," the tale that mentions zombies.³³ She would have known the reference in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that I like to think of as a zombie invasion foretelling an apocalyptic moment:

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.³⁴

Shakespeare doesn't tell us if the shroud-wrapped corpses went around eating brains, but the fact is, Jane Austen knew her monsters. She *could* have written horror literature but she chose not to.

She did not need vampires, zombies, or giant squid because she had human beings to write about who were fully as terrifying. Think of Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park*, who tries to deaden timid Fanny Price's spirit through belittlement and insult: death by a thousand psychological cuts. Or Mr. Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility*, who nearly destroys Eliza II (Colonel Brandon's ward) and Marianne Dashwood by tearing out their hearts. Or the cheapskates, Mr. and Mrs. John Dashwood, who happily would let their relatives in *Sense and Sensibility* bleed to death financially. Austen did not use a stake to the heart or the "slovenly Butchering" of a brain to halt these monsters in their tracks; she beheaded her social monsters with the swordsmanship of the satirist, "the fineness of a stroak that separates the Head from the Body, and leaves it standing in its place."³⁵

Even if Austen's protagonists do not get all the money they deserve or get to marry their first loves, they are as powerful as zombie-slayers. They successfully negotiate a world full of friends and relations—friends and relations who can do as much damage as a monster. In fact, Austen's heroines

are *more* powerful: after all, compared to dealing with people, handling monsters is fairly straightforward. Fanny Price survives her thousand cuts, both Eliza II and Marianne recover their health and happiness, and the Dashwood daughters need never bother with their stingy brother again. Like the hapless protagonists in *Shaun of the Dead* or *Zombieland*, Austen's protagonists become stronger and better people through trial by fire and sheer persistence. Fighting monsters is a necessary part of life for everyone, not just heroes: that is the message many allegorical classics and monster films have shown us. The monster-mashups and Austen both offer the same unsentimental advice for life, albeit with differing degrees of subtlety: kill the zombies and get on with it.

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Notes

1. Nicholas Appert, *L'art de conserver pendant plusieurs années toutes les substances animales et végétales* (Paris, 1810).
2. Susan Harvey, "Jane Austen's Spelling," *The Virtual Linguist*, 23 October 2010, <http://virtuallinguist.typepad.com>.
3. Mark Harvey, Steve Quilley, and Huw Benyon, *Exploring the Tomato: Transformations of Nature, Society and Economy* (Cheltenham; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2002), 30, 31.
4. Jane Austen, Letter to Cassandra, 11–12 October 1813, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Fay (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1995), 235. Of course, Austen spelled the word *tomata*—no doubt why she needed to be copyedited.
5. Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U. Press, 2000), 161 (hereafter cited as "Ellis").
6. The book that introduced Americans to the notion of the zombie as the walking dead was William Seabrook's adventure travelogue *The Magic Island* (New York: Harcourt, 1929). It describes the apparent ability of Haitian sorcerers to animate corpses through voodoo for use as slaves. Later research has suggested a possible chemical mechanism for zombification. In *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985) and *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1988), Wade Davis describes poisons that he claims constitute "zombie powder."
7. For a detailed discussion of the historical origins of these various types of zombies, their presence in current Haitian culture, and a refutation of Davis's zombie-powder theory, see the excellent and witty article by Hans-W. Ackermann and Jeanine Gauthier, "The Ways and Nature of the Zombi," *Journal of American Folklore* 104 (1991): 466–94.
8. See Jim Chevalier, "The Zombie Wore Taffeta," *Sundries: An 18th Century Newsletter*, no. 36 (24 June 2006), <http://www.chezjim.com/sundries>. A quick search through *Gallica* does not turn up significant additional French references in our time period.

9. Page 67. I thank Diedre Stuffer, a recent graduate of the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, for mining *ECCO* to find these pre-*OED* English references for me.

10. *European Magazine* 14 (October 1788): 280n.

11. W[illiam] H[olloway], *European Magazine* 35 (March 1799): 164.

12. Robert Southey, *History of Brazil* (London 1819), 3.24. Also see Markman Ellis, 212.

13. Hilda Roderick Ellis, *The Road to Hel: A Study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1942; rpt. New York: Greenwood, 1968), 93.

14. For a good synopsis of the walking dead in English and Scottish traditions, see Nancy Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture," *Past and Present* 152 (August 1996): 3–45, and Jacqueline Simpson, "Repentant Soul or Walking Corpse? Debatable Apparitions in Medieval England," *Folklore* 114 (2003): 389–402.

15. Frank Edgar Farley, *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement*, vol. 9 of *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* (Boston: Ginn, 1903). See 229–31 for a substantial list of British works before 1814 that translate or are inspired by northern sagas and legends.

16. Walter Scott, "Abstract of the Erbyggja-Saga" in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities from the Earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances*, ed. Henry William Weber, Robert Jamieson, and Walter Scott (London: Longman; Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1814), 477–513. Also see Caciola, 15–16.

17. This grim tale from *Egils saga ok Ásmundar* was widely distributed. Saxo Grammaticus includes it in the fifth book of his history of the Danes; in England, Thomas Nashe repeats it near the end of *Pierce Penilesse* (1592), and it is still current at the end of the eighteenth century, turning up in John Pinkerton's *An Inquiry into the History of Scotland* (1794), among other places. Hilda Ellis gives the names of the two friends as Aran and Ásmundr (55–56).

18. The most recent Romero film, *Survival of the Dead*, was filmed in Canada.

19. See <http://www.egadzombies.co.uk>. The trailer is available via YouTube; a feature-length film is under development by Fizz and Ginger Films under the name *The Curse of the Buxom Strumpet*.

20. Kyle Bishop, *American Zombie Gothic* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 23 (hereafter cited as "Bishop").

21. This may explain the prevalence of "eighteenth-century zombie wigs" at internet-based costume stores.

22. Ben Child, "Pride and Predator to give Jane Austen an extreme makeover," *The Guardian*, 17 February 2009, www.guardian.co.uk.

23. Jason Rekulak, Celebrity Interview with Steven Shaw, 16 October 2009, *AskMen*, http://www.askmen.com/celebs/interview_300/352_jason-rekulak-interview.html.

24. Alan Greenspan, Remarks at the Annual Dinner and Francis Boyer

Lecture of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 5 Dec. 1996, www.federalreserve.gov/BOARDDOCS/SPEECHES/19961205.htm.

25. Rekulak.

26. Deidre Lynch suggests that Elizabeth Bennet's "ninja training" goes well with muddy petticoats. Quoted in Jennifer Schuessler, "I was a Regency Zombie," *New York Times*, 22 February 2009, www.nytimes.com.

27. Jane Austen and Seth Graham-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2009), 151 (hereafter cited as "Austen and Graham-Smith").

28. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. Vivien Jones (London: Penguin, 2003), 56–57.

29. Lev Grossman, "Pride and Prejudice, Now with Zombies!" Interview with Seth Grahame-Smith, *Time*, Thursday 2 April 2009, www.time.com.

30. Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. Ros Ballaster (London: Penguin, 2003), 85–86.

31. Jane Austen and Ben H. Winters, *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* (Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2009), 213.

32. *Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh), Saturday, 3 December 1808.

33. "Instance of Posthumous Friendship," *European Magazine* 35 (March 1799): 1641–43.

34. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, *The Arden Shakespeare* (London: Thomson, 2006), 1.1.111–15.

35. John Dryden, "Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire," *The Works of John Dryden*, gen. ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1974), 4: 71. Coincidentally, beheading was the preferred method of dealing with revenants in both Icelandic and medieval English practice. See Simpson, 390, 394.

'A Tale of a (Book-)Barrel': Another Meaning of the *Tale*'s Title

by Kirsten Juhas

The difficulty of analyzing Jonathan Swift's multi-layered, chameleonic satirical masterpiece, *A Tale of a Tub*, starts with the difficulty of explaining its polysemous title. Remarkably, the degree of confusion generated in generations of readers has been increased by the facts, first, that none of the meanings proposed can be excluded as not germane to the work, second, that they have to be placed in different allegorical, iconographical, proverbial, literary, and historical contexts,¹ and third, that several of these meanings and contexts intersect and supplement each other.

The first proposal on the *Tale*'s meaning is made by the Tale-teller himself. In the Preface, the Hack offers what reads like a plausible, if allegorically loaded, explanation: